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The Visionary

\$30 MILLION
Available in
Community
Development
Block Grant
Funds (Page 4)

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

SUMMER 1997

COMMISSION FINDS ITS NICHE

When the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs (CMA) was established by the General Assembly in July 1993, the need for the agency was debated within and outside of the minority community. For the first two years of the agency's existence, the small staff was consumed with the nuts and bolts of properly establishing the agency as an operating entity of State government. Focusing on the real mission of the agency, i.e., finding ways to alleviate socioeconomic deprivation among the State's minority population, was still a mission to be achieved.

Since August 1995, Janie A. Davis, the agency's second executive director, has focused on (1) making the public aware of the agency's existence and mission and (2) carving out a niche for the agency that does not duplicate services provided

by other state agencies and entities that also address social and economic issues.

The public got its first widespread introduction to the agency when it hosted the national conference of the African American Male National Council (AAMNC) in Charleston, South Carolina October 1996. Approximately 300 persons attended the event while several thousands heard about the agency's efforts. The conference spotlighted the plight of the African American male.

Since the conference, the staff has spent its time identifying

indicators of socioeconomic deprivation and their impact on all segments of the State's population, especially the minority population.

Indicators of Socioeconomic Deprivation

1. Infant mortality and morbidity
 2. Life cycle of poverty
 3. High school dropout / Illiteracy
 4. Unemployment
 5. Low per capita income
 6. Death, divorce, or loss of second breadwinner
 7. Fatherlessness
 8. Crime
 9. Unwed teenage parenthood
-

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Message from the Director



JANIE A. DAVIS

It is with great pleasure that we present the first edition of *The Visionary*, a quarterly publication of the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs (CMA). The publication, as its name infers, will share the visions of this agency and those of citizens interested in improving the plight of the State's minority population.

Minorities make up almost a third of the State's population, with a large portion of those persons living in conditions of socioeconomic deprivation. In order for the State to prosper, we must find ways to ensure that all of its citizens prosper. We will report what this agency, other governmental entities, and local citizens are doing to make this goal a reality.

We invite you to share your thoughts and ideas, to partner

with us, and to be part of the driving force to improve the plight of all South Carolinians.

- Janie A. Davis

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs was created to provide the citizenry with a single point of contact for information regarding the State's minority population.

Minorities constitute 31.0 percent of the State's population, with African Americans representing 96.1 percent of all minorities in the State of South Carolina.

It is the responsibility of the Commission to study the causes and effects of the socioeconomic deprivation facing minorities and to work toward implementing initiatives that alleviate such deprivation.

With the help of grassroots volunteers from across the State, the Commission assesses the problems plaguing the minority population, recommends alternative solutions for resolving problems, and prepares for distribution factual information to be used in shaping new public policies and local initiatives.

Our Mission:

- To research the causes and effects of minority socioeconomic deprivation in the State;
- To establish a database of statistical information for distribution to members of the General Assembly and other entities capable of effecting change;
- To be the State's clearinghouse for minority statistical information and to publish a Statewide statistical abstract on minority affairs;
- To provide communities with a single point of contact to obtain raw data and information necessary for local research and planning;
- To liaison with community leaders, businesses and elected officials to build the infrastructure needed to foster economic prosperity among the minority population;
- To serve as the catalyst for identifying and linking funding and programs from both the public and private sectors;
- To solicit funding for and coordinate programs necessary to address inequities confronting minorities in the State; and
- To provide assistance and information on Voting Rights Act submissions, as well as other related areas.

MARLBORO COUNTY INITIATIVE UNDERWAY

High illiteracy, early parenthood, and drug and alcohol addiction are everyday occurrences; so much so that many people do not give it much thought. "That's simply the way it is and if it's not on my doorstep, why should I be concerned about it? It's those people over there with the problems."

What people fail to see is that all communities are suffering, some more than others. For the last several months, that is the message being conveyed by staffers of the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs. Specifically, the Commission's staff has been holding public meetings in Marlboro County to discuss socioeconomic deprivation. Their initiative is a follow-up to earlier efforts by the Department of Commerce to help facilitate economic development. The difference is that this process addresses social issues that can directly or indirectly hamper the County's ability to bring additional jobs to the area. The hard issues are addressed head on, i.e., illiteracy, early parenthood, drug and alcohol abuse, crime, fatherlessness, etc.

Members of the African American community have been meeting since early May with Commission staffers. More than 200 persons have

participated in the process and a steering committee is now working on short-term and long-term strategies that will be reported to the larger African American community for further discussion and implementation. On August 4, 1997, the Commission expanded the process to White and Native American communities.

The Commission's strategy is to work with each community privately to address sensitive issues in an honest and culturally appropriate manner. Problems are discussed and strategies developed using a two-pronged approach: those that the community must take responsibility for addressing and those that involve all communities working together

for a common cause. The Commission staffers identify the common initiatives as they work with each group. During this process, each community must honestly discuss the issues and develop strategies that can be implemented by members of that community that are realistic, culturally sensitive, and compassionate.

The Commission has identified 13 counties with extremely high poverty and deprivation. In all of these counties, the majority population is ethnic minorities, primarily African Americans. These counties will be targeted first for technical assistance by the Commission, while other counties may receive other types of assistance on specific initiatives.

<i>County</i>	<i>* Ethnic Population</i>	<i>** Poverty Ranking</i>
Allendale	69.0	1
Williamsburg	64.4	4
Lee	62.9	2
Bamberg	61.7	6
McCormick	58.9	13
Orangeburg	58.9	11
Fairfield	58.5	15
Jasper	57.8	10
Clarendon	56.9	3
Marion	55.4	5
Hampton	54.4	8
Calhoun	51.8	18
Marlboro	51.3	9

Source: 1990 U.S. Census Bureau

* Counties where ethnic population greater than 50.0 percent

** Ranking based on percent of persons below poverty level in 1989

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

The South Carolina Department of Commerce conducted a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Workshop in Columbia on Tuesday, July 22, 1997 to provide instructions for potential Community Development Block Grant applicants. If you were not in attendance at the workshop, you still have time to get information and assistance. A total of \$30,811,000 is available to fund community projects targeted to benefit low and moderate income persons. Deadlines to submit CDBG project proposals are as follows: first round, October 15, 1997; second round, February 15, 1998; third round, June 15, 1998. Therefore, if a community has a project in mind but feels it would not be ready to present a proposal by October 15, 1997, the process allows for more than one round of awards.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program provides grants to units of local government, not individuals, to carry out a wide-range of eligible community development activities directed toward neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and

improved community facilities and services. All projects funded must meet one of three broad national objectives: (1) benefit low and moderate income persons; (2) aid in the prevention or elimination of slum and blight; and (3) meet other community needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious threat to the health or welfare of the community where other financial resources are not available to meet such needs.

Under the CDBG Program, all units of general local government are eligible to apply for financial assistance with the exception of the following communities: the cities of Aiken, Anderson, Charleston, Columbia, Florence, Greenville, Myrtle Beach, North Charleston, Rock Hill, Spartanburg, and Sumter, as well as Greenville County and all municipalities within Greenville County and Charleston County (with the exception of Lincolnville). For an application to be considered eligible for funding, the applicant must comply with the requirements of the annual Program Statement and submit a complete and acceptable application.

The CDBG program provides for four basic types of eligible projects: (1) Community Investment Program, (2) Economic Development Program, (3) Regional

Planning Assistance Program, and (4) Local Planning Assistance Program. Each of these programs has matching funds requirements.

For further information or to discuss a particular project, contact the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs at (803) 737-7570.

CMA COSPONSORS INSTITUTES

The Commission will cosponsor with the Ohio Visionary Leaders Institute two days of training entitled, "Methods to Ensure Academic Excellence in the African American Student, especially the African American Male." The conference for teachers, administrators, and human service providers will focus on the following subjects: learning versus teaching styles; improving parental involvement in schools; ways to combat harmful perceptions by teachers, students, and parents; understanding and changing the behavior of the confrontational student; correlation between lack of education and the potential for incarceration; and the educator's role in keeping youth out of prison.

Instructors include Jawanza Kunjufu, Dr. Janice Hale, Mychal Wynn, and Ako Kambon. The training will be

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CMA (Continued from pg. 4)

held in two locations: Charleston (October 13-14, 1997) and Columbia (October 31 - November 1, 1997). For more information, contact Thomas Smith at (803) 737-7570.

COMMISSION

(Continued from pg. 1)

The Commission's staff has determined that education is key to overcoming the indicators of deprivation for all races. Among the indicators are several that are direct hindrances to achieving education, i.e., (1) early parenthood, (2) dropping out of school, and (3) an active life of crime.

The Commission has undertaken implementing three pilot initiatives to address the major hindrances, i.e., creating an Institute for Responsible Parenthood, an Institute for Literacy and Retention, and an Institute for Family Reconnection and Healing.

The Institute for Responsible Parenthood will address the lack of early parenthood education in schools and the problem of fatherlessness. Fatherlessness has become a national issue that lawmakers and society have not addressed. South Carolina is no exception.

A recently televised segment of CBS 48 Hours spotlighted

the plight of children whose fathers are missing from their lives:

"Runaway Fathers, Throwaway Kids"

Nationally:

- ◆ One out of every four children grows up in a home without a father present and this number is increasing.
- ◆ Fatherless children are:
 - twice as likely to drop out of school;
 - five times as likely to be poor;
 - at greater risk for drug abuse, early parenting, pregnancy, and suicide;
 - more likely to be physically and sexually abused, and
 - to suffer from mental illness.
- ◆ Seventy-two percent of adolescent murderers grew up in homes with absent fathers.

South Carolina:

Of the youthful offenders in the juvenile justice system:

- ◆ 77.5 percent come from homes where the natural father is not present;
- ◆ 49.1 percent come from homes headed by mothers only;
- ◆ 59.0 percent come from backgrounds where either a parent, sibling, or both have had some kind of involvement in the criminal justice system;
- ◆ 49.0 percent come from homes where the family income is less than ten thousand dollars a year; and
- ◆ the #1 juvenile offense is truancy - failure to attend school.

Source: SCDJJ; 1995-96, 1996-97

Through the Institute, the Commission will identify ways to educate young males and females, estranged parents, the public, and policy makers

regarding a child's need for both healthy parents - not simply child support. We must find ways to involve fathers in the lives of their children or risk continuing the cycle of poverty and deprivation.

The Institute for Literacy and Retention will work with local school districts to identify at-risk students, track down dropouts and to influence them to return to school or enter an adult education program. The Commission sees as a major need incentives for school districts to work harder to keep at-risk students in the educational system.

Finally, the Commission will focus its attention on crime and the destructive impact crime has on the family unit. **The Institute for Family Reconnection and Healing** will study delinquency or criminal activity among related family members and identify ways to reconnect broken families over time and begin the process of healing. Fatherlessness and family involvement in the criminal justice system strongly increase the risk for criminal activity among young people.

The Commission would like to hear from other organizations, churches, and individuals who may presently be working on similar initiatives. Persons and organizations interested in working with the Commission to formulate new strategies should contact the agency at (803) 737-7570.

AAMNC CONFERENCE

The Second Annual African American Male National Council (AAMNC) conference will convene in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 25-28, 1997 at the Milwaukee Hilton Hotel.

The theme of the conference is *Let the Healing Begin: Mind, Body and Soul*. Conference highlights will include discussions on health, community, and spirituality issues. Among the featured

speakers will be Dr. Jocelyn Elders, Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, Dr. Carl Bell, Asa Hilliard, Dr. Alim Muhammad, and Maxine Womble.

The conference will incorporate a "Youth Day" that will include rites of passage, cybertainment, and education. An "Evening of Grace" will feature a national recording gospel artist. Mark your calendar today!

For registration information, call the AAMNC office at (414) 562-1558 or Asha Family Services, Inc. at (414) 562-1116.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Governor's Summit on Fatherhood

September 30, 1997, Contact Randy Page at (803) 734-9818

Minority Health Issues Conference

December 7-9, 1997, Call (803) 734-4972

CMA PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

General Population Abstract

May 1996

Statistical Profile by Counties

July 1997

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